



PATENT APPLICATION
Docket No: 9279.79

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re application of	Michael James Pratt et al.)
)
Serial No.:	10/757,744) Art Unit
) Unknown
Confirmation No.:	Unknown)
)
Filed:	January 15, 2004)
)
For:	POCKET CLOSURE DEVICE)

PETITION TO MAKE SPECIAL UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.102(d)

Mail Stop Petition
Assistant Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Dear Sir or Madam:

Applicants respectfully request that examination of the above-referenced patent application be advanced out of turn and that prosecution be performed in an expedited manner. Applicants believe all claims are directed to a single invention and will make an election without traverse if the Office determines that all claims are not obviously directed to a single invention.

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Applicants submit this written Petition to Make Special in conformance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.102(d), along with the appropriate fee as set forth in 37 C.F.R. § 1.17(h).

Applicants have caused to be made a careful and thorough pre-examination search of the prior art. This search was performed by a professional search firm under the direction of Noreen A. Fabean. The search was conducted for United States patented art in Class 206, Subclass 315.5. Additional prior art searches performed by attorneys at Kirton and McConkie have also been performed. A copy of each potentially relevant reference discovered in both Noreen A. Fabean's search and Kirton and McConkie's search is provided for your review.

The following is a list of references that were discovered in the above-identified pre-examination search. Each of the references will be individually discussed in greater detail below:

6,478,151	5,803,333	5,341,928
6,357,586	5,560,749	5,269,410
6,131,733	5,425,452	5,222,598
5,988,379	5,407,112	5,176,253
5,899,371	5,402,883	4,869,365

A photocopy of Form PTO-1449 submitted on March 23, 2004, citing the above-identified references has been included for the convenience of the Examiner.

Nature of the Present Invention

The present invention is a pocket closure device for facilitating retention of and access to items placed in a pocket. Specifically, certain embodiments of the present invention comprise an elongate resilient member laterally disposed along a pocket and attached to a front panel of the pocket and to an outer surface of a golf bag. The elongate resilient member is operationally connected to the front panel and may be selectively biased to open the pocket in a single

movement. In addition, the potential energy harnessed by so biasing the resilient member causes the resilient member to automatically seal the pocket opening when the biasing force is removed.

A handle element may be provided to facilitate biasing the front panel of the pocket, as discussed above, to quickly and easily access its contents. A handle element may be incorporated into the elongate resilient member at an attachment point on the pocket. Alternatively, a handle element may reside independently on the front panel of the pocket.

A grip element may be incorporated into the front panel of the pocket to facilitate leverage and transport of the bag. According to certain embodiments of the present invention, a grip element may comprise a flap coupled to an outer surface of the front panel of a pocket that has dimensions sufficient to accommodate a hand of a user. In this manner, a user may use the grip element to leverage the bag on one end, while using a second hand to support the opposite end of the bag.

A guard element may extend over an opening of the pocket to further protect pocket contents. The guard element may be attached to the pocket itself, or to an outer surface of a golf bag or other item to which the pocket is attached such that the guard element extends over the pocket opening. In selected embodiments, the guard element may be selectively actuated, and may be removable.

Further, a pocket may incorporate drainage apertures to facilitate cleaning, ventilating and/or draining the pocket.

As the present invention provides a mechanical pocket closure device that utilizes principles of potential energy to provide access to and retention of pocket contents, the present invention avoids the problems of the prior art while improving the security and accessibility of pocket contents.

Detailed Discussion of the Prior Art References in Light of the Present Invention

The prior art references are listed above and discussed in reverse chronological order.

United States Patent No. 6,478,151 to Schmidt et al.

United States Patent No. 6,478,151 issued on November 12, 2002 to Schmidt et al. (hereinafter “Schmidt”) discloses a pocket assembly is removably attached to a generally tubular body of a golf bag. The pocket assembly includes a receptacle with a pair of pockets for holding golf accessories. An upstanding rib is formed on the body, and spring clips are provided on the receptacle for gripping engagement with the rib to position the pocket assembly at a selected location on the body. When the pocket assembly is attached to the body, the receptacle straddles the rib and the pockets are disposed on opposite sides of the rib. The spring clips may be disengaged from the rib so that the pocket assembly may be removed from the body and relocated to another selected location on the body. Straps attached to the spring clips are wrapped around the body, and hook and loop fasteners are used to fasten the straps together.

The present invention is readily distinguishable from the teachings of Schmidt. Indeed, independent claim 1 of the present invention relates to a pocket closure device for a bag, wherein said bag comprises a top end, a bottom end, and an outer surface, said pocket closure device comprising: a storage receptacle having a front panel, a back panel, side panels, and an interior space, wherein said storage receptacle is coupled to said outer surface of said bag and wherein said storage receptacle further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and biasing means coupled to said front panel and to said outer surface of said bag for substantially sealing said interior space in a first closed position, and for allowing access to said interior space in a second open position. As Schmidt neither discloses nor suggests a pocket closure device for a bag, wherein said bag comprises a top end, a bottom end, and an outer surface, said pocket

closure device comprising: a storage receptacle having a front panel, a back panel, side panels, and an interior space, wherein said storage receptacle is coupled to said outer surface of said bag and wherein said storage receptacle further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and biasing means coupled to said front panel and to said outer surface of said bag for substantially sealing said interior space in a first closed position, and for allowing access to said interior space in a second open position, Schmidt clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 1 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 2-7 add further limitations to independent claim 1, Schmidt neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 2-7.

The present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Schmidt in light of independent claim 8. Indeed, independent claim 8 of the present invention relates to a pocket assembly for facilitating retention of and access to accessories placed therein, said pocket assembly comprising: an accessory pouch integral to an outer surface of a bag, wherein said accessory pouch is capable of receiving and retaining accessories, and wherein said accessory pouch further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and at least one resilient member laterally disposed along said accessory pouch, said at least one resilient member capable of being selectively actuated to allow access to an interior space defined by said accessory pouch. As Schmidt neither discloses nor suggests a pocket assembly for facilitating retention of and access to accessories placed therein, said pocket assembly comprising: an accessory pouch integral to an outer surface of a bag, wherein said accessory pouch is capable of receiving and retaining accessories, and wherein said accessory pouch further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and at least one resilient member laterally disposed along said accessory pouch, said at least one resilient member capable of being selectively actuated to allow access to an interior space defined by said accessory pouch, Schmidt clearly does not anticipate

nor render obvious independent claim 8 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 9-14 add further limitations to independent claim 8, Schmidt neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 9-14.

The present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Schmidt in light of independent claim 15. Indeed, independent claim 15 of the present invention relates to a bag comprising: a housing for receiving and retaining a plurality of items; a pocket member biased to said housing for receiving and retaining at least one accessory, wherein said pocket member comprises: a front panel; a bottom support panel attached to said front panel; a back panel attached to said bottom support panel, wherein said back panel is retained substantially adjacent said housing; side panels coupled between said front panel and said back panel such that said front panel is retained substantially opposite said back panel; and at least one biasing element longitudinally disposed along at least one of said side panels and coupled to each of said front panel and said housing such that said pocket member provides selective access to said at least one accessory. As Schmidt neither discloses nor suggests a bag comprising: a housing for receiving and retaining a plurality of items; a pocket member biased to said housing for receiving and retaining at least one accessory, wherein said pocket member comprises: a front panel; a bottom support panel attached to said front panel; a back panel attached to said bottom support panel, wherein said back panel is retained substantially adjacent said housing; side panels coupled between said front panel and said back panel such that said front panel is retained substantially opposite said back panel; and at least one biasing element longitudinally disposed along at least one of said side panels and coupled to each of said front panel and said housing such that said pocket member provides selective access to said at least one accessory, Schmidt clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 15 of the present application.

Moreover, as claims 16-24 add further limitations to independent claim 15, Schmidt neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 16-24.

Finally, the present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Schmidt in light of independent claim 25. Indeed, independent claim 25 of the present invention relates to a method for facilitating retention of and access to items in a bag, said method comprising: providing a bag having a pocket member with an opening for receiving and retaining at least one item; coupling to a front panel of said pocket member a first portion of at least one elongate biasing member; attaching a second portion of said at least one elongate biasing member to said bag, wherein said at least one elongate biasing member provides selective access to an interior of said pocket member. As Schmidt neither discloses nor suggests a method for facilitating retention of and access to items in a bag, said method comprising: providing a bag having a pocket member with an opening for receiving and retaining at least one item; coupling to a front panel of said pocket member a first portion of at least one elongate biasing member; attaching a second portion of said at least one elongate biasing member to said bag, wherein said at least one elongate biasing member provides selective access to an interior of said pocket member, Schmidt clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 25 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 26-31 adds further limitations to independent claim 25, Schmidt neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 26-31.

United States Patent No. 6,357,586 to Pratt et al.

United States Patent No. 6,357,586 issued on March 19, 2002 to Pratt et al. (hereinafter “Pratt”) discloses a golf ball holder that holds a plurality of golf balls, each golf ball being independently removable from the holder without the need to remove one of the other balls first. The holder can be attached to a golf bag either permanently or temporarily. The holder is made

from a flexible fabric with openings at a first end and a second end. Golf balls are slipped into the holder from either end. The golf balls are fitted within a location where an opening is made in the holder. The opening allows the user to see whether a ball is available as well as the type of ball. The opening can stretch to allow the user to remove the golf ball through the opening rather than through one of the end openings. The openings where the golf balls are held can also be large enough to insert a golf ball into the holder. The holder can be sewn to an outside portion of the golf bag, typically near the top for easy access. The holder can be attached via a hook and eye attachment means, such as Velcro, or with clips or buckles, or a combination of either. In one embodiment, the holder has room to hold three golf balls, each ball having its own opening to show whether a ball is within the holder and what type of ball it is. Further, the ball holder is made of neoprene in one embodiment, but can also be made from other durable materials that can stretch and compress in order to hold the balls securely in place.

The present invention is readily distinguishable from the teachings of Pratt. Indeed, independent claim 1 of the present invention relates to a pocket closure device for a bag, wherein said bag comprises a top end, a bottom end, and an outer surface, said pocket closure device comprising: a storage receptacle having a front panel, a back panel, side panels, and an interior space, wherein said storage receptacle is coupled to said outer surface of said bag and wherein said storage receptacle further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and biasing means coupled to said front panel and to said outer surface of said bag for substantially sealing said interior space in a first closed position, and for allowing access to said interior space in a second open position. As Pratt neither discloses nor suggests a pocket closure device for a bag, wherein said bag comprises a top end, a bottom end, and an outer surface, said pocket closure device comprising: a storage receptacle having a front panel, a back panel, side panels, and an

4

interior space, wherein said storage receptacle is coupled to said outer surface of said bag and wherein said storage receptacle further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and biasing means coupled to said front panel and to said outer surface of said bag for substantially sealing said interior space in a first closed position, and for allowing access to said interior space in a second open position, Pratt clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 1 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 2-7 add further limitations to independent claim 1, Pratt neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 2-7.

The present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Pratt in light of independent claim 8. Indeed, independent claim 8 of the present invention relates to a pocket assembly for facilitating retention of and access to accessories placed therein, said pocket assembly comprising: an accessory pouch integral to an outer surface of a bag, wherein said accessory pouch is capable of receiving and retaining accessories, and wherein said accessory pouch further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and at least one resilient member laterally disposed along said accessory pouch, said at least one resilient member capable of being selectively actuated to allow access to an interior space defined by said accessory pouch. As Pratt neither discloses nor suggests a pocket assembly for facilitating retention of and access to accessories placed therein, said pocket assembly comprising: an accessory pouch integral to an outer surface of a bag, wherein said accessory pouch is capable of receiving and retaining accessories, and wherein said accessory pouch further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and at least one resilient member laterally disposed along said accessory pouch, said at least one resilient member capable of being selectively actuated to allow access to an interior space defined by said accessory pouch, Pratt clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 8 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 9-14 add

further limitations to independent claim 8, Pratt neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 9-14.

The present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Pratt in light of independent claim 15. Indeed, independent claim 15 of the present invention relates to a bag comprising: a housing for receiving and retaining a plurality of items; a pocket member biased to said housing for receiving and retaining at least one accessory, wherein said pocket member comprises: a front panel; a bottom support panel attached to said front panel; a back panel attached to said bottom support panel, wherein said back panel is retained substantially adjacent said housing; side panels coupled between said front panel and said back panel such that said front panel is retained substantially opposite said back panel; and at least one biasing element longitudinally disposed along at least one of said side panels and coupled to each of said front panel and said housing such that said pocket member provides selective access to said at least one accessory. As Pratt neither discloses nor suggests a bag comprising: a housing for receiving and retaining a plurality of items; a pocket member biased to said housing for receiving and retaining at least one accessory, wherein said pocket member comprises: a front panel; a bottom support panel attached to said front panel; a back panel attached to said bottom support panel, wherein said back panel is retained substantially adjacent said housing; side panels coupled between said front panel and said back panel such that said front panel is retained substantially opposite said back panel; and at least one biasing element longitudinally disposed along at least one of said side panels and coupled to each of said front panel and said housing such that said pocket member provides selective access to said at least one accessory, Pratt clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 15 of the present application. Moreover, as

claims 16-24 add further limitations to independent claim 15, Pratt neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 16-24.

Finally, the present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Pratt in light of independent claim 25. Indeed, independent claim 25 of the present invention relates to a method for facilitating retention of and access to items in a bag, said method comprising: providing a bag having a pocket member with an opening for receiving and retaining at least one item; coupling to a front panel of said pocket member a first portion of at least one elongate biasing member; attaching a second portion of said at least one elongate biasing member to said bag, wherein said at least one elongate biasing member provides selective access to an interior of said pocket member. As Pratt neither discloses nor suggests a method for facilitating retention of and access to items in a bag, said method comprising: providing a bag having a pocket member with an opening for receiving and retaining at least one item; coupling to a front panel of said pocket member a first portion of at least one elongate biasing member; attaching a second portion of said at least one elongate biasing member to said bag, wherein said at least one elongate biasing member provides selective access to an interior of said pocket member, Pratt clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 25 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 26-31 adds further limitations to independent claim 25, Pratt neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 26-31.

United States Patent No. 6,131,733 to Ergle et al.

United States Patent No. 6,131,733 issued on October 17, 2000 to Ergle et al. (hereinafter “Ergle”) discloses a holding device capable of being secured to a conventional golf bag. The holding device includes a holding body having an interior storage area for storing items, such as, and preferable, golf tees. The interior area is accessible via an opened top and the open top

constitute a first removal mechanism. An attaching mechanism extends through said holding body for providing and enabling closure and accessibility to the interior storage area and for enabling attachment to a conventional golf bag. A second removal mechanism extends through the holding body and is configured for enabling items to be removed from the interior storage area singularly while preventing items to be inserted into the interior area.

The present invention is readily distinguishable from the teachings of Ergle. Indeed, independent claim 1 of the present invention relates to a pocket closure device for a bag, wherein said bag comprises a top end, a bottom end, and an outer surface, said pocket closure device comprising: a storage receptacle having a front panel, a back panel, side panels, and an interior space, wherein said storage receptacle is coupled to said outer surface of said bag and wherein said storage receptacle further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and biasing means coupled to said front panel and to said outer surface of said bag for substantially sealing said interior space in a first closed position, and for allowing access to said interior space in a second open position. As Ergle neither discloses nor suggests a pocket closure device for a bag, wherein said bag comprises a top end, a bottom end, and an outer surface, said pocket closure device comprising: a storage receptacle having a front panel, a back panel, side panels, and an interior space, wherein said storage receptacle is coupled to said outer surface of said bag and wherein said storage receptacle further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and biasing means coupled to said front panel and to said outer surface of said bag for substantially sealing said interior space in a first closed position, and for allowing access to said interior space in a second open position, Ergle clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 1 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 2-7 add further limitations to independent claim 1, Ergle neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 2-7.

The present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Ergle in light of independent claim 8. Indeed, independent claim 8 of the present invention relates to a pocket assembly for facilitating retention of and access to accessories placed therein, said pocket assembly comprising: an accessory pouch integral to an outer surface of a bag, wherein said accessory pouch is capable of receiving and retaining accessories, and wherein said accessory pouch further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and at least one resilient member laterally disposed along said accessory pouch, said at least one resilient member capable of being selectively actuated to allow access to an interior space defined by said accessory pouch. As Ergle neither discloses nor suggests a pocket assembly for facilitating retention of and access to accessories placed therein, said pocket assembly comprising: an accessory pouch integral to an outer surface of a bag, wherein said accessory pouch is capable of receiving and retaining accessories, and wherein said accessory pouch further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and at least one resilient member laterally disposed along said accessory pouch, said at least one resilient member capable of being selectively actuated to allow access to an interior space defined by said accessory pouch, Ergle clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 8 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 9-14 add further limitations to independent claim 8, Ergle neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 9-14.

The present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Ergle in light of independent claim 15. Indeed, independent claim 15 of the present invention relates to a bag comprising: a housing for receiving and retaining a plurality of items; a pocket member biased to said housing for receiving and retaining at least one accessory, wherein said pocket member comprises: a front panel; a bottom support panel attached to said front panel; a back panel

attached to said bottom support panel, wherein said back panel is retained substantially adjacent said housing; side panels coupled between said front panel and said back panel such that said front panel is retained substantially opposite said back panel; and at least one biasing element longitudinally disposed along at least one of said side panels and coupled to each of said front panel and said housing such that said pocket member provides selective access to said at least one accessory. As Ergle neither discloses nor suggests a bag comprising: a housing for receiving and retaining a plurality of items; a pocket member biased to said housing for receiving and retaining at least one accessory, wherein said pocket member comprises: a front panel; a bottom support panel attached to said front panel; a back panel attached to said bottom support panel, wherein said back panel is retained substantially adjacent said housing; side panels coupled between said front panel and said back panel such that said front panel is retained substantially opposite said back panel; and at least one biasing element longitudinally disposed along at least one of said side panels and coupled to each of said front panel and said housing such that said pocket member provides selective access to said at least one accessory, Ergle clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 15 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 16-24 add further limitations to independent claim 15, Ergle neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 16-24.

Finally, the present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Ergle in light of independent claim 25. Indeed, independent claim 25 of the present invention relates to a method for facilitating retention of and access to items in a bag, said method comprising: providing a bag having a pocket member with an opening for receiving and retaining at least one item; coupling to a front panel of said pocket member a first portion of at least one elongate biasing member; attaching a second portion of said at least one elongate biasing member to said

bag, wherein said at least one elongate biasing member provides selective access to an interior of said pocket member. As Ergle neither discloses nor suggests a method for facilitating retention of and access to items in a bag, said method comprising: providing a bag having a pocket member with an opening for receiving and retaining at least one item; coupling to a front panel of said pocket member a first portion of at least one elongate biasing member; attaching a second portion of said at least one elongate biasing member to said bag, wherein said at least one elongate biasing member provides selective access to an interior of said pocket member, Ergle clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 25 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 26-31 adds further limitations to independent claim 25, Ergle neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 26-31.

United States Patent No. 5,988,379 to Yearous

United States Patent No. 5,988,379 issued on November 23, 1999 to Yearous (hereinafter “Yearous”) discloses a golf bag that includes a club carrier and a ball pouch, the bottom edge of which is hingedly attached to the carrier for movement between an open configuration, wherein a storage pouch is exposed, and a closed configuration. A divider in the ball pouch bisects the pouch. Also, a panel on the carrier establishes a sundry chamber, and shelves are slidably disposed in the sundry chamber. Moreover, the top of the club carrier defines an open end that is reinforced by a stiff collar, and a horizontal tube is positioned next to the collar. A strap of a golf cart can be threaded through the tube to secure the golf bag to the golf cart without crushing items in the golf bag.

The present invention is readily distinguishable from the teachings of Yearous. Indeed, independent claim 1 of the present invention relates to a pocket closure device for a bag, wherein said bag comprises a top end, a bottom end, and an outer surface, said pocket closure device

comprising: a storage receptacle having a front panel, a back panel, side panels, and an interior space, wherein said storage receptacle is coupled to said outer surface of said bag and wherein said storage receptacle further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and biasing means coupled to said front panel and to said outer surface of said bag for substantially sealing said interior space in a first closed position, and for allowing access to said interior space in a second open position. As Yearous neither discloses nor suggests a pocket closure device for a bag, wherein said bag comprises a top end, a bottom end, and an outer surface, said pocket closure device comprising: a storage receptacle having a front panel, a back panel, side panels, and an interior space, wherein said storage receptacle is coupled to said outer surface of said bag and wherein said storage receptacle further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and biasing means coupled to said front panel and to said outer surface of said bag for substantially sealing said interior space in a first closed position, and for allowing access to said interior space in a second open position, Yearous clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 1 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 2-7 add further limitations to independent claim 1, Yearous neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 2-7.

The present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Yearous in light of independent claim 8. Indeed, independent claim 8 of the present invention relates to a pocket assembly for facilitating retention of and access to accessories placed therein, said pocket assembly comprising: an accessory pouch integral to an outer surface of a bag, wherein said accessory pouch is capable of receiving and retaining accessories, and wherein said accessory pouch further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and at least one resilient member laterally disposed along said accessory pouch, said at least one resilient member capable of being selectively actuated to allow access to an interior space defined by said accessory

pouch. As Yearous neither discloses nor suggests a pocket assembly for facilitating retention of and access to accessories placed therein, said pocket assembly comprising: an accessory pouch integral to an outer surface of a bag, wherein said accessory pouch is capable of receiving and retaining accessories, and wherein said accessory pouch further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and at least one resilient member laterally disposed along said accessory pouch, said at least one resilient member capable of being selectively actuated to allow access to an interior space defined by said accessory pouch, Yearous clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 8 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 9-14 add further limitations to independent claim 8, Yearous neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 9-14.

The present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Yearous in light of independent claim 15. Indeed, independent claim 15 of the present invention relates to a bag comprising: a housing for receiving and retaining a plurality of items; a pocket member biased to said housing for receiving and retaining at least one accessory, wherein said pocket member comprises: a front panel; a bottom support panel attached to said front panel; a back panel attached to said bottom support panel, wherein said back panel is retained substantially adjacent said housing; side panels coupled between said front panel and said back panel such that said front panel is retained substantially opposite said back panel; and at least one biasing element longitudinally disposed along at least one of said side panels and coupled to each of said front panel and said housing such that said pocket member provides selective access to said at least one accessory. As Yearous neither discloses nor suggests a bag comprising: a housing for receiving and retaining a plurality of items; a pocket member biased to said housing for receiving and retaining at least one accessory, wherein said pocket member comprises: a front panel; a

bottom support panel attached to said front panel; a back panel attached to said bottom support panel, wherein said back panel is retained substantially adjacent said housing; side panels coupled between said front panel and said back panel such that said front panel is retained substantially opposite said back panel; and at least one biasing element longitudinally disposed along at least one of said side panels and coupled to each of said front panel and said housing such that said pocket member provides selective access to said at least one accessory, Yearous clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 15 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 16-24 add further limitations to independent claim 15, Yearous neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 16-24.

Finally, the present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Yearous in light of independent claim 25. Indeed, independent claim 25 of the present invention relates to a method for facilitating retention of and access to items in a bag, said method comprising: providing a bag having a pocket member with an opening for receiving and retaining at least one item; coupling to a front panel of said pocket member a first portion of at least one elongate biasing member; attaching a second portion of said at least one elongate biasing member to said bag, wherein said at least one elongate biasing member provides selective access to an interior of said pocket member. As Yearous neither discloses nor suggests a method for facilitating retention of and access to items in a bag, said method comprising: providing a bag having a pocket member with an opening for receiving and retaining at least one item; coupling to a front panel of said pocket member a first portion of at least one elongate biasing member; attaching a second portion of said at least one elongate biasing member to said bag, wherein said at least one elongate biasing member provides selective access to an interior of said pocket member, Yearous clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 25 of the present application.

Moreover, as claims 26-31 adds further limitations to independent claim 25, Yearous neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 26-31.

United States Patent No. 5,899,371 to Weliver

United States Patent No. 5,899,371 issued on May 4, 1999 to Weliver (hereinafter “Weliver”) discloses a pack for carrying valuables and golf accessories by a golfer. The pack includes a pouch having a zippered closure for retaining non-golf accessories such as keys, change, glasses, and the like and an external pocket for retaining golf accessories during play. The pouch is elongated and concave with a rigid backing material having an integral clip thereon for affixing the pouch to the wearer's belt or to the golf bag. The pack is intended to make the golf accessories readily available during play while securing the golfer's valuables and to be easily removable from the golf bag after play so that the valuables can be maintained on the golfer's person.

The present invention is readily distinguishable from the teachings of Weliver. Indeed, independent claim 1 of the present invention relates to a pocket closure device for a bag, wherein said bag comprises a top end, a bottom end, and an outer surface, said pocket closure device comprising: a storage receptacle having a front panel, a back panel, side panels, and an interior space, wherein said storage receptacle is coupled to said outer surface of said bag and wherein said storage receptacle further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and biasing means coupled to said front panel and to said outer surface of said bag for substantially sealing said interior space in a first closed position, and for allowing access to said interior space in a second open position. As Weliver neither discloses nor suggests a pocket closure device for a bag, wherein said bag comprises a top end, a bottom end, and an outer surface, said pocket closure device comprising: a storage receptacle having a front panel, a back panel, side panels,

and an interior space, wherein said storage receptacle is coupled to said outer surface of said bag and wherein said storage receptacle further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and biasing means coupled to said front panel and to said outer surface of said bag for substantially sealing said interior space in a first closed position, and for allowing access to said interior space in a second open position, Weliver clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 1 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 2-7 add further limitations to independent claim 1, Weliver neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 2-7.

The present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Weliver in light of independent claim 8. Indeed, independent claim 8 of the present invention relates to a pocket assembly for facilitating retention of and access to accessories placed therein, said pocket assembly comprising: an accessory pouch integral to an outer surface of a bag, wherein said accessory pouch is capable of receiving and retaining accessories, and wherein said accessory pouch further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and at least one resilient member laterally disposed along said accessory pouch, said at least one resilient member capable of being selectively actuated to allow access to an interior space defined by said accessory pouch. As Weliver neither discloses nor suggests a pocket assembly for facilitating retention of and access to accessories placed therein, said pocket assembly comprising: an accessory pouch integral to an outer surface of a bag, wherein said accessory pouch is capable of receiving and retaining accessories, and wherein said accessory pouch further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and at least one resilient member laterally disposed along said accessory pouch, said at least one resilient member capable of being selectively actuated to allow access to an interior space defined by said accessory pouch, Weliver clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 8 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 9-14 add

further limitations to independent claim 8, Weliver neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 9-14.

The present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Weliver in light of independent claim 15. Indeed, independent claim 15 of the present invention relates to a bag comprising: a housing for receiving and retaining a plurality of items; a pocket member biased to said housing for receiving and retaining at least one accessory, wherein said pocket member comprises: a front panel; a bottom support panel attached to said front panel; a back panel attached to said bottom support panel, wherein said back panel is retained substantially adjacent said housing; side panels coupled between said front panel and said back panel such that said front panel is retained substantially opposite said back panel; and at least one biasing element longitudinally disposed along at least one of said side panels and coupled to each of said front panel and said housing such that said pocket member provides selective access to said at least one accessory. As Weliver neither discloses nor suggests a bag comprising: a housing for receiving and retaining a plurality of items; a pocket member biased to said housing for receiving and retaining at least one accessory, wherein said pocket member comprises: a front panel; a bottom support panel attached to said front panel; a back panel attached to said bottom support panel, wherein said back panel is retained substantially adjacent said housing; side panels coupled between said front panel and said back panel such that said front panel is retained substantially opposite said back panel; and at least one biasing element longitudinally disposed along at least one of said side panels and coupled to each of said front panel and said housing such that said pocket member provides selective access to said at least one accessory, Weliver clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 15 of the present application.

Moreover, as claims 16-24 add further limitations to independent claim 15, Weliver neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 16-24.

Finally, the present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Weliver in light of independent claim 25. Indeed, independent claim 25 of the present invention relates to a method for facilitating retention of and access to items in a bag, said method comprising: providing a bag having a pocket member with an opening for receiving and retaining at least one item; coupling to a front panel of said pocket member a first portion of at least one elongate biasing member; attaching a second portion of said at least one elongate biasing member to said bag, wherein said at least one elongate biasing member provides selective access to an interior of said pocket member. As Weliver neither discloses nor suggests a method for facilitating retention of and access to items in a bag, said method comprising: providing a bag having a pocket member with an opening for receiving and retaining at least one item; coupling to a front panel of said pocket member a first portion of at least one elongate biasing member; attaching a second portion of said at least one elongate biasing member to said bag, wherein said at least one elongate biasing member provides selective access to an interior of said pocket member, Weliver clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 25 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 26-31 adds further limitations to independent claim 25, Weliver neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 26-31.

United States Patent No. 5,803,333 to Fawcett

United States Patent No. 5,803,333 issued on September 8, 1998 to Fawcett (hereinafter "Fawcett") discloses a pack for wearing on a person's back, comprising a front facing outwardly when the pack is worn and a pocket attached to and extending at least partially across the front of the pack. The pocket overlies generally the small of the person's back when the pack is worn, and

includes an open entrance defined by an upper edge oriented for readily being located by touch when the person reaches behind their back, thereby guiding and facilitating access into the pocket. The pocket preferably includes an upwardly extending pocket flap that provides the upper edge of the pocket.

The present invention is readily distinguishable from the teachings of Fawcett. Indeed, independent claim 1 of the present invention relates to a pocket closure device for a bag, wherein said bag comprises a top end, a bottom end, and an outer surface, said pocket closure device comprising: a storage receptacle having a front panel, a back panel, side panels, and an interior space, wherein said storage receptacle is coupled to said outer surface of said bag and wherein said storage receptacle further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and biasing means coupled to said front panel and to said outer surface of said bag for substantially sealing said interior space in a first closed position, and for allowing access to said interior space in a second open position. As Fawcett neither discloses nor suggests a pocket closure device for a bag, wherein said bag comprises a top end, a bottom end, and an outer surface, said pocket closure device comprising: a storage receptacle having a front panel, a back panel, side panels, and an interior space, wherein said storage receptacle is coupled to said outer surface of said bag and wherein said storage receptacle further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and biasing means coupled to said front panel and to said outer surface of said bag for substantially sealing said interior space in a first closed position, and for allowing access to said interior space in a second open position, Fawcett clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 1 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 2-7 add further limitations to independent claim 1, Fawcett neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 2-7.

The present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Fawcett in light of independent claim 8. Indeed, independent claim 8 of the present invention relates to a pocket assembly for facilitating retention of and access to accessories placed therein, said pocket assembly comprising: an accessory pouch integral to an outer surface of a bag, wherein said accessory pouch is capable of receiving and retaining accessories, and wherein said accessory pouch further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and at least one resilient member laterally disposed along said accessory pouch, said at least one resilient member capable of being selectively actuated to allow access to an interior space defined by said accessory pouch. As Fawcett neither discloses nor suggests a pocket assembly for facilitating retention of and access to accessories placed therein, said pocket assembly comprising: an accessory pouch integral to an outer surface of a bag, wherein said accessory pouch is capable of receiving and retaining accessories, and wherein said accessory pouch further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and at least one resilient member laterally disposed along said accessory pouch, said at least one resilient member capable of being selectively actuated to allow access to an interior space defined by said accessory pouch, Fawcett clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 8 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 9-14 add further limitations to independent claim 8, Fawcett neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 9-14.

The present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Fawcett in light of independent claim 15. Indeed, independent claim 15 of the present invention relates to a bag comprising: a housing for receiving and retaining a plurality of items; a pocket member biased to said housing for receiving and retaining at least one accessory, wherein said pocket member comprises: a front panel; a bottom support panel attached to said front panel; a back panel

attached to said bottom support panel, wherein said back panel is retained substantially adjacent said housing; side panels coupled between said front panel and said back panel such that said front panel is retained substantially opposite said back panel; and at least one biasing element longitudinally disposed along at least one of said side panels and coupled to each of said front panel and said housing such that said pocket member provides selective access to said at least one accessory. As Fawcett neither discloses nor suggests a bag comprising: a housing for receiving and retaining a plurality of items; a pocket member biased to said housing for receiving and retaining at least one accessory, wherein said pocket member comprises: a front panel; a bottom support panel attached to said front panel; a back panel attached to said bottom support panel, wherein said back panel is retained substantially adjacent said housing; side panels coupled between said front panel and said back panel such that said front panel is retained substantially opposite said back panel; and at least one biasing element longitudinally disposed along at least one of said side panels and coupled to each of said front panel and said housing such that said pocket member provides selective access to said at least one accessory, Fawcett clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 15 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 16-24 add further limitations to independent claim 15, Fawcett neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 16-24.

Finally, the present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Fawcett in light of independent claim 25. Indeed, independent claim 25 of the present invention relates to a method for facilitating retention of and access to items in a bag, said method comprising: providing a bag having a pocket member with an opening for receiving and retaining at least one item; coupling to a front panel of said pocket member a first portion of at least one elongate biasing member; attaching a second portion of said at least one elongate biasing member to said

bag, wherein said at least one elongate biasing member provides selective access to an interior of said pocket member. As Fawcett neither discloses nor suggests a method for facilitating retention of and access to items in a bag, said method comprising: providing a bag having a pocket member with an opening for receiving and retaining at least one item; coupling to a front panel of said pocket member a first portion of at least one elongate biasing member; attaching a second portion of said at least one elongate biasing member to said bag, wherein said at least one elongate biasing member provides selective access to an interior of said pocket member, Fawcett clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 25 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 26-31 adds further limitations to independent claim 25, Fawcett neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 26-31.

United States Patent No. 5,560,749 to Madison et al.

United States Patent No. 5,560,749 issued on October 1, 1996 to Madison et al. (hereinafter “Madison”) discloses a bleaching composition and method that includes contacting a substrate with a peroxygen compound and a polymeric bleach precursor which has a monomer repeating unit of a particular structure. This reference is irrelevant to the present invention but was included herein in order to disclose all of the references returned in the professional search.

United States Patent No. 5,425,452 to Shanks et al.

United States Patent No. 5,425,452 issued on June 20, 1995 to Shanks et al. (hereinafter “Shanks”) discloses a cylindrical structure comprised of tubes within and without a tube, a tapered shaft complete with shaft end arrow pointed attachment, a tension band at the top of the structure that secures and positions the handle and the tubes, and another tension band that reinforces the tubular structure, aids in securing and positioning the tapered shaft to the structure, surrounds the tubes, and serves as a carrier for miscellaneous items such that golfers, archers and

others might find convenient, and a base end closure tube support that connects the tube ends and the lower end of the tapered shaft. The shaft and arrow pointed attachment provides for aeration of the turf over which the golfer, or archer, or other is transversing, as the person pauses and vertically parks the structure by piercing the ground with the tapered shaft end arrow pointed attachment. The invention also serves as a close-in defense mechanism.

The present invention is readily distinguishable from the teachings of Shanks. Indeed, independent claim 1 of the present invention relates to a pocket closure device for a bag, wherein said bag comprises a top end, a bottom end, and an outer surface, said pocket closure device comprising: a storage receptacle having a front panel, a back panel, side panels, and an interior space, wherein said storage receptacle is coupled to said outer surface of said bag and wherein said storage receptacle further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and biasing means coupled to said front panel and to said outer surface of said bag for substantially sealing said interior space in a first closed position, and for allowing access to said interior space in a second open position. As Shanks neither discloses nor suggests a pocket closure device for a bag, wherein said bag comprises a top end, a bottom end, and an outer surface, said pocket closure device comprising: a storage receptacle having a front panel, a back panel, side panels, and an interior space, wherein said storage receptacle is coupled to said outer surface of said bag and wherein said storage receptacle further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and biasing means coupled to said front panel and to said outer surface of said bag for substantially sealing said interior space in a first closed position, and for allowing access to said interior space in a second open position, Shanks clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 1 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 2-7 add further limitations to independent claim 1, Shanks neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 2-7.

The present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Shanks in light of independent claim 8. Indeed, independent claim 8 of the present invention relates to a pocket assembly for facilitating retention of and access to accessories placed therein, said pocket assembly comprising: an accessory pouch integral to an outer surface of a bag, wherein said accessory pouch is capable of receiving and retaining accessories, and wherein said accessory pouch further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and at least one resilient member laterally disposed along said accessory pouch, said at least one resilient member capable of being selectively actuated to allow access to an interior space defined by said accessory pouch. As Shanks neither discloses nor suggests a pocket assembly for facilitating retention of and access to accessories placed therein, said pocket assembly comprising: an accessory pouch integral to an outer surface of a bag, wherein said accessory pouch is capable of receiving and retaining accessories, and wherein said accessory pouch further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and at least one resilient member laterally disposed along said accessory pouch, said at least one resilient member capable of being selectively actuated to allow access to an interior space defined by said accessory pouch, Shanks clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 8 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 9-14 add further limitations to independent claim 8, Shanks neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 9-14.

The present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Shanks in light of independent claim 15. Indeed, independent claim 15 of the present invention relates to a bag comprising: a housing for receiving and retaining a plurality of items; a pocket member biased to said housing for receiving and retaining at least one accessory, wherein said pocket member comprises: a front panel; a bottom support panel attached to said front panel; a back panel

attached to said bottom support panel, wherein said back panel is retained substantially adjacent said housing; side panels coupled between said front panel and said back panel such that said front panel is retained substantially opposite said back panel; and at least one biasing element longitudinally disposed along at least one of said side panels and coupled to each of said front panel and said housing such that said pocket member provides selective access to said at least one accessory. As Shanks neither discloses nor suggests a bag comprising: a housing for receiving and retaining a plurality of items; a pocket member biased to said housing for receiving and retaining at least one accessory, wherein said pocket member comprises: a front panel; a bottom support panel attached to said front panel; a back panel attached to said bottom support panel, wherein said back panel is retained substantially adjacent said housing; side panels coupled between said front panel and said back panel such that said front panel is retained substantially opposite said back panel; and at least one biasing element longitudinally disposed along at least one of said side panels and coupled to each of said front panel and said housing such that said pocket member provides selective access to said at least one accessory, Shanks clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 15 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 16-24 add further limitations to independent claim 15, Shanks neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 16-24.

Finally, the present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Shanks in light of independent claim 25. Indeed, independent claim 25 of the present invention relates to a method for facilitating retention of and access to items in a bag, said method comprising: providing a bag having a pocket member with an opening for receiving and retaining at least one item; coupling to a front panel of said pocket member a first portion of at least one elongate biasing member; attaching a second portion of said at least one elongate biasing member to said

bag, wherein said at least one elongate biasing member provides selective access to an interior of said pocket member. As Shanks neither discloses nor suggests a method for facilitating retention of and access to items in a bag, said method comprising: providing a bag having a pocket member with an opening for receiving and retaining at least one item; coupling to a front panel of said pocket member a first portion of at least one elongate biasing member; attaching a second portion of said at least one elongate biasing member to said bag, wherein said at least one elongate biasing member provides selective access to an interior of said pocket member, Shanks clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 25 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 26-31 adds further limitations to independent claim 25, Shanks neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 26-31.

United States Patent No. 5,407,112 to Christodoulou et al.

United States Patent No. 5,407,112 issued on April 18, 1995 to Christodoulou et al. (hereinafter “Christodoulou”) discloses a convertible backpack having a storage compartment for a raincoat in the front of the pack covered by a completely detachable totebag having handles and a plurality of storage compartments in the back of the pack, the raincoat being held fast in the storage compartment by fastening straps that can also be used to support the totebag at the bottom of the pack when the raincoat is worn or alternatively the tote bag can be held at the bottom of the pack in suspended condition.

The present invention is readily distinguishable from the teachings of Christodoulou. Indeed, independent claim 1 of the present invention relates to a pocket closure device for a bag, wherein said bag comprises a top end, a bottom end, and an outer surface, said pocket closure device comprising: a storage receptacle having a front panel, a back panel, side panels, and an interior space, wherein said storage receptacle is coupled to said outer surface of said bag and

wherein said storage receptacle further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and biasing means coupled to said front panel and to said outer surface of said bag for substantially sealing said interior space in a first closed position, and for allowing access to said interior space in a second open position. As Christodoulou neither discloses nor suggests a pocket closure device for a bag, wherein said bag comprises a top end, a bottom end, and an outer surface, said pocket closure device comprising: a storage receptacle having a front panel, a back panel, side panels, and an interior space, wherein said storage receptacle is coupled to said outer surface of said bag and wherein said storage receptacle further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and biasing means coupled to said front panel and to said outer surface of said bag for substantially sealing said interior space in a first closed position, and for allowing access to said interior space in a second open position, Christodoulou clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 1 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 2-7 add further limitations to independent claim 1, Christodoulou neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 2-7.

The present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Christodoulou in light of independent claim 8. Indeed, independent claim 8 of the present invention relates to a pocket assembly for facilitating retention of and access to accessories placed therein, said pocket assembly comprising: an accessory pouch integral to an outer surface of a bag, wherein said accessory pouch is capable of receiving and retaining accessories, and wherein said accessory pouch further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and at least one resilient member laterally disposed along said accessory pouch, said at least one resilient member capable of being selectively actuated to allow access to an interior space defined by said accessory pouch. As Christodoulou neither discloses nor suggests a pocket assembly for facilitating

retention of and access to accessories placed therein, said pocket assembly comprising: an accessory pouch integral to an outer surface of a bag, wherein said accessory pouch is capable of receiving and retaining accessories, and wherein said accessory pouch further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and at least one resilient member laterally disposed along said accessory pouch, said at least one resilient member capable of being selectively actuated to allow access to an interior space defined by said accessory pouch, Christodoulou clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 8 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 9-14 add further limitations to independent claim 8, Christodoulou neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 9-14.

The present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Christodoulou in light of independent claim 15. Indeed, independent claim 15 of the present invention relates to a bag comprising: a housing for receiving and retaining a plurality of items; a pocket member biased to said housing for receiving and retaining at least one accessory, wherein said pocket member comprises: a front panel; a bottom support panel attached to said front panel; a back panel attached to said bottom support panel, wherein said back panel is retained substantially adjacent said housing; side panels coupled between said front panel and said back panel such that said front panel is retained substantially opposite said back panel; and at least one biasing element longitudinally disposed along at least one of said side panels and coupled to each of said front panel and said housing such that said pocket member provides selective access to said at least one accessory. As Christodoulou neither discloses nor suggests a bag comprising: a housing for receiving and retaining a plurality of items; a pocket member biased to said housing for receiving and retaining at least one accessory, wherein said pocket member comprises: a front panel; a bottom support panel attached to said front panel; a back panel attached to said bottom support

panel, wherein said back panel is retained substantially adjacent said housing; side panels coupled between said front panel and said back panel such that said front panel is retained substantially opposite said back panel; and at least one biasing element longitudinally disposed along at least one of said side panels and coupled to each of said front panel and said housing such that said pocket member provides selective access to said at least one accessory, Christodoulou clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 15 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 16-24 add further limitations to independent claim 15, Christodoulou neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 16-24.

Finally, the present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Christodoulou in light of independent claim 25. Indeed, independent claim 25 of the present invention relates to a method for facilitating retention of and access to items in a bag, said method comprising: providing a bag having a pocket member with an opening for receiving and retaining at least one item; coupling to a front panel of said pocket member a first portion of at least one elongate biasing member; attaching a second portion of said at least one elongate biasing member to said bag, wherein said at least one elongate biasing member provides selective access to an interior of said pocket member. As Christodoulou neither discloses nor suggests a method for facilitating retention of and access to items in a bag, said method comprising: providing a bag having a pocket member with an opening for receiving and retaining at least one item; coupling to a front panel of said pocket member a first portion of at least one elongate biasing member; attaching a second portion of said at least one elongate biasing member to said bag, wherein said at least one elongate biasing member provides selective access to an interior of said pocket member, Christodoulou clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 25 of the present

application. Moreover, as claims 26-31 adds further limitations to independent claim 25, Christodoulou neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 26-31.

United States Patent No. 5,402,883 to Shin

United States Patent No. 5,402,883 issued on April 4, 1995 to Shin (hereinafter “Shin”) discloses a golf bag 10 including unique pockets 50 and 52 and a novel divider member 110. The bag 10 employs an enlarged, elongated hollow main club holding tube 12 having a predetermined length slightly less than the length of a typical golf club, opposed sides, an open top end, and a closed bottom end. The pockets 50 and 52 are on a side of the tube opposite a shoulder strap 20 and aligned in a row, with the upper pocket 50 disposed substantially directly above the lower pocket 52 when the bag 10 is upright. The enlarged pockets 50 and 52 each have a box-like configuration with a back 58 adjacent the tube, a pair of sides 54 and 56 generally parallel to each other and each having generally the same configuration with edges that are generally parallel to each other, and a front wall 60 disposed between the sides and having opposed edges which are generally parallel to each other. Each edge of the front wall is connected to one edge of an adjacent side by a zipper mechanism 76. Each side 54 and 56 is flexible to allow the sides to be manually bent outward. The divider member 110 is within the tube 12 and it divides the tube into a plurality of different club holding sections. The divider member 110 includes a bag element 112 having a bottom wall 114 attached to the bottom of the tube 12.

The present invention is readily distinguishable from the teachings of Shin. Indeed, independent claim 1 of the present invention relates to a pocket closure device for a bag, wherein said bag comprises a top end, a bottom end, and an outer surface, said pocket closure device comprising: a storage receptacle having a front panel, a back panel, side panels, and an interior

space, wherein said storage receptacle is coupled to said outer surface of said bag and wherein said storage receptacle further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and biasing means coupled to said front panel and to said outer surface of said bag for substantially sealing said interior space in a first closed position, and for allowing access to said interior space in a second open position. As Shin neither discloses nor suggests a pocket closure device for a bag, wherein said bag comprises a top end, a bottom end, and an outer surface, said pocket closure device comprising: a storage receptacle having a front panel, a back panel, side panels, and an interior space, wherein said storage receptacle is coupled to said outer surface of said bag and wherein said storage receptacle further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and biasing means coupled to said front panel and to said outer surface of said bag for substantially sealing said interior space in a first closed position, and for allowing access to said interior space in a second open position, Shin clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 1 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 2-7 add further limitations to independent claim 1, Shin neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 2-7.

The present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Shin in light of independent claim 8. Indeed, independent claim 8 of the present invention relates to a pocket assembly for facilitating retention of and access to accessories placed therein, said pocket assembly comprising: an accessory pouch integral to an outer surface of a bag, wherein said accessory pouch is capable of receiving and retaining accessories, and wherein said accessory pouch further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and at least one resilient member laterally disposed along said accessory pouch, said at least one resilient member capable of being selectively actuated to allow access to an interior space defined by said accessory pouch. As Shin neither discloses nor suggests a pocket assembly for facilitating retention of and

access to accessories placed therein, said pocket assembly comprising: an accessory pouch integral to an outer surface of a bag, wherein said accessory pouch is capable of receiving and retaining accessories, and wherein said accessory pouch further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and at least one resilient member laterally disposed along said accessory pouch, said at least one resilient member capable of being selectively actuated to allow access to an interior space defined by said accessory pouch, Shin clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 8 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 9-14 add further limitations to independent claim 8, Shin neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 9-14.

The present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Shin in light of independent claim 15. Indeed, independent claim 15 of the present invention relates to a bag comprising: a housing for receiving and retaining a plurality of items; a pocket member biased to said housing for receiving and retaining at least one accessory, wherein said pocket member comprises: a front panel; a bottom support panel attached to said front panel; a back panel attached to said bottom support panel, wherein said back panel is retained substantially adjacent said housing; side panels coupled between said front panel and said back panel such that said front panel is retained substantially opposite said back panel; and at least one biasing element longitudinally disposed along at least one of said side panels and coupled to each of said front panel and said housing such that said pocket member provides selective access to said at least one accessory. As Shin neither discloses nor suggests a bag comprising: a housing for receiving and retaining a plurality of items; a pocket member biased to said housing for receiving and retaining at least one accessory, wherein said pocket member comprises: a front panel; a bottom support panel attached to said front panel; a back panel attached to said bottom support panel,

wherein said back panel is retained substantially adjacent said housing; side panels coupled between said front panel and said back panel such that said front panel is retained substantially opposite said back panel; and at least one biasing element longitudinally disposed along at least one of said side panels and coupled to each of said front panel and said housing such that said pocket member provides selective access to said at least one accessory, Shin clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 15 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 16-24 add further limitations to independent claim 15, Shin neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 16-24.

Finally, the present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Shin in light of independent claim 25. Indeed, independent claim 25 of the present invention relates to a method for facilitating retention of and access to items in a bag, said method comprising: providing a bag having a pocket member with an opening for receiving and retaining at least one item; coupling to a front panel of said pocket member a first portion of at least one elongate biasing member; attaching a second portion of said at least one elongate biasing member to said bag, wherein said at least one elongate biasing member provides selective access to an interior of said pocket member. As Shin neither discloses nor suggests a method for facilitating retention of and access to items in a bag, said method comprising: providing a bag having a pocket member with an opening for receiving and retaining at least one item; coupling to a front panel of said pocket member a first portion of at least one elongate biasing member; attaching a second portion of said at least one elongate biasing member to said bag, wherein said at least one elongate biasing member provides selective access to an interior of said pocket member, Shin clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 25 of the present application. Moreover, as

claims 26-31 adds further limitations to independent claim 25, Shin neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 26-31.

United States Patent No. 5,341,928 to Jones et al.

United States Patent No. 5,341,928 issued on August 30, 1994 to Jones et al. (hereinafter “Jones”) discloses a single sheet of flexible fabric that is folded and creased to form a compact pouch or pocket that can be attached to and detached from a golf bag. The pocket connects to the bag by hooks located at the opposite ends of the pocket. The pocket has a long central zippered opening in the front, and a pleated back, but is constructed so that, when empty, the pocket lies flat against the golf bag.

The present invention is readily distinguishable from the teachings of Jones. Indeed, independent claim 1 of the present invention relates to a pocket closure device for a bag, wherein said bag comprises a top end, a bottom end, and an outer surface, said pocket closure device comprising: a storage receptacle having a front panel, a back panel, side panels, and an interior space, wherein said storage receptacle is coupled to said outer surface of said bag and wherein said storage receptacle further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and biasing means coupled to said front panel and to said outer surface of said bag for substantially sealing said interior space in a first closed position, and for allowing access to said interior space in a second open position. As Jones neither discloses nor suggests a pocket closure device for a bag, wherein said bag comprises a top end, a bottom end, and an outer surface, said pocket closure device comprising: a storage receptacle having a front panel, a back panel, side panels, and an interior space, wherein said storage receptacle is coupled to said outer surface of said bag and wherein said storage receptacle further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and biasing means coupled to said front panel and to said outer surface of said bag for substantially

sealing said interior space in a first closed position, and for allowing access to said interior space in a second open position, Jones clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 1 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 2-7 add further limitations to independent claim 1, Jones neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 2-7.

The present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Jones in light of independent claim 8. Indeed, independent claim 8 of the present invention relates to a pocket assembly for facilitating retention of and access to accessories placed therein, said pocket assembly comprising: an accessory pouch integral to an outer surface of a bag, wherein said accessory pouch is capable of receiving and retaining accessories, and wherein said accessory pouch further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and at least one resilient member laterally disposed along said accessory pouch, said at least one resilient member capable of being selectively actuated to allow access to an interior space defined by said accessory pouch. As Jones neither discloses nor suggests a pocket assembly for facilitating retention of and access to accessories placed therein, said pocket assembly comprising: an accessory pouch integral to an outer surface of a bag, wherein said accessory pouch is capable of receiving and retaining accessories, and wherein said accessory pouch further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and at least one resilient member laterally disposed along said accessory pouch, said at least one resilient member capable of being selectively actuated to allow access to an interior space defined by said accessory pouch, Jones clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 8 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 9-14 add further limitations to independent claim 8, Jones neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 9-14.

The present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Jones in light of independent claim 15. Indeed, independent claim 15 of the present invention relates to a bag comprising: a housing for receiving and retaining a plurality of items; a pocket member biased to said housing for receiving and retaining at least one accessory, wherein said pocket member comprises: a front panel; a bottom support panel attached to said front panel; a back panel attached to said bottom support panel, wherein said back panel is retained substantially adjacent said housing; side panels coupled between said front panel and said back panel such that said front panel is retained substantially opposite said back panel; and at least one biasing element longitudinally disposed along at least one of said side panels and coupled to each of said front panel and said housing such that said pocket member provides selective access to said at least one accessory. As Jones neither discloses nor suggests a bag comprising: a housing for receiving and retaining a plurality of items; a pocket member biased to said housing for receiving and retaining at least one accessory, wherein said pocket member comprises: a front panel; a bottom support panel attached to said front panel; a back panel attached to said bottom support panel, wherein said back panel is retained substantially adjacent said housing; side panels coupled between said front panel and said back panel such that said front panel is retained substantially opposite said back panel; and at least one biasing element longitudinally disposed along at least one of said side panels and coupled to each of said front panel and said housing such that said pocket member provides selective access to said at least one accessory, Jones clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 15 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 16-24 add further limitations to independent claim 15, Jones neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 16-24.

Finally, the present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Jones in light of independent claim 25. Indeed, independent claim 25 of the present invention relates to a method for facilitating retention of and access to items in a bag, said method comprising: providing a bag having a pocket member with an opening for receiving and retaining at least one item; coupling to a front panel of said pocket member a first portion of at least one elongate biasing member; attaching a second portion of said at least one elongate biasing member to said bag, wherein said at least one elongate biasing member provides selective access to an interior of said pocket member. As Jones neither discloses nor suggests a method for facilitating retention of and access to items in a bag, said method comprising: providing a bag having a pocket member with an opening for receiving and retaining at least one item; coupling to a front panel of said pocket member a first portion of at least one elongate biasing member; attaching a second portion of said at least one elongate biasing member to said bag, wherein said at least one elongate biasing member provides selective access to an interior of said pocket member, Jones clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 25 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 26-31 adds further limitations to independent claim 25, Jones neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 26-31.

United States Patent No. 5,269,410 to Abregano

United States Patent No. 5,269,410 issued on December 14, 1993 to Abregano (hereinafter "Abregano") discloses a golf accessory organizer, which consists of a portfolio being rectangular shaped. A spring clip is for removably attaching an upper short side of the portfolio to a top cuff of a golf bag. A hook and loop fabric fastener strip is for removably retaining the portfolio in a folded closed position. An elastic band is affixed to an inner surface of the portfolio, for holding in a neatly organized manner, a plurality of tees and a divot fixer

with a ball marker thereto. A pouch is affixed to the inner surface of the portfolio below the elastic band for storing a plurality of other small supplies and items thereto. A second hook and loop fabric fastener strip is for sealing the pouch to prevent the other small supplies and items from falling out of the pouch.

The present invention is readily distinguishable from the teachings of Abregano. Indeed, independent claim 1 of the present invention relates to a pocket closure device for a bag, wherein said bag comprises a top end, a bottom end, and an outer surface, said pocket closure device comprising: a storage receptacle having a front panel, a back panel, side panels, and an interior space, wherein said storage receptacle is coupled to said outer surface of said bag and wherein said storage receptacle further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and biasing means coupled to said front panel and to said outer surface of said bag for substantially sealing said interior space in a first closed position, and for allowing access to said interior space in a second open position. As Abregano neither discloses nor suggests a pocket closure device for a bag, wherein said bag comprises a top end, a bottom end, and an outer surface, said pocket closure device comprising: a storage receptacle having a front panel, a back panel, side panels, and an interior space, wherein said storage receptacle is coupled to said outer surface of said bag and wherein said storage receptacle further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and biasing means coupled to said front panel and to said outer surface of said bag for substantially sealing said interior space in a first closed position, and for allowing access to said interior space in a second open position, Abregano clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 1 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 2-7 add further limitations to independent claim 1, Abregano neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 2-7.

The present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Abregano in light of independent claim 8. Indeed, independent claim 8 of the present invention relates to a pocket assembly for facilitating retention of and access to accessories placed therein, said pocket assembly comprising: an accessory pouch integral to an outer surface of a bag, wherein said accessory pouch is capable of receiving and retaining accessories, and wherein said accessory pouch further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and at least one resilient member laterally disposed along said accessory pouch, said at least one resilient member capable of being selectively actuated to allow access to an interior space defined by said accessory pouch. As Abregano neither discloses nor suggests a pocket assembly for facilitating retention of and access to accessories placed therein, said pocket assembly comprising: an accessory pouch integral to an outer surface of a bag, wherein said accessory pouch is capable of receiving and retaining accessories, and wherein said accessory pouch further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and at least one resilient member laterally disposed along said accessory pouch, said at least one resilient member capable of being selectively actuated to allow access to an interior space defined by said accessory pouch, Abregano clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 8 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 9-14 add further limitations to independent claim 8, Abregano neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 9-14.

The present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Abregano in light of independent claim 15. Indeed, independent claim 15 of the present invention relates to a bag comprising: a housing for receiving and retaining a plurality of items; a pocket member biased to said housing for receiving and retaining at least one accessory, wherein said pocket member comprises: a front panel; a bottom support panel attached to said front panel; a back panel

attached to said bottom support panel, wherein said back panel is retained substantially adjacent said housing; side panels coupled between said front panel and said back panel such that said front panel is retained substantially opposite said back panel; and at least one biasing element longitudinally disposed along at least one of said side panels and coupled to each of said front panel and said housing such that said pocket member provides selective access to said at least one accessory. As Abregano neither discloses nor suggests a bag comprising: a housing for receiving and retaining a plurality of items; a pocket member biased to said housing for receiving and retaining at least one accessory, wherein said pocket member comprises: a front panel; a bottom support panel attached to said front panel; a back panel attached to said bottom support panel, wherein said back panel is retained substantially adjacent said housing; side panels coupled between said front panel and said back panel such that said front panel is retained substantially opposite said back panel; and at least one biasing element longitudinally disposed along at least one of said side panels and coupled to each of said front panel and said housing such that said pocket member provides selective access to said at least one accessory, Abregano clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 15 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 16-24 add further limitations to independent claim 15, Abregano neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 16-24.

Finally, the present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Abregano in light of independent claim 25. Indeed, independent claim 25 of the present invention relates to a method for facilitating retention of and access to items in a bag, said method comprising: providing a bag having a pocket member with an opening for receiving and retaining at least one item; coupling to a front panel of said pocket member a first portion of at least one elongate biasing member; attaching a second portion of said at least one elongate biasing member to said

bag, wherein said at least one elongate biasing member provides selective access to an interior of said pocket member. As Abregano neither discloses nor suggests a method for facilitating retention of and access to items in a bag, said method comprising: providing a bag having a pocket member with an opening for receiving and retaining at least one item; coupling to a front panel of said pocket member a first portion of at least one elongate biasing member; attaching a second portion of said at least one elongate biasing member to said bag, wherein said at least one elongate biasing member provides selective access to an interior of said pocket member, Abregano clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 25 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 26-31 adds further limitations to independent claim 25, Abregano neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 26-31.

United States Patent No. 5,222,598 to Yamazoe

United States Patent No. 5,222,598 issued on June 29, 1993 to Yamazoe (hereinafter “Yamazoe”) discloses a novel golf bag with a pocket for receiving a golf ball, a pocket for receiving a shoulder belt, a compartment for receiving small or large golf goods and a bag made of a duplex construction for heat or cold insulation. The present golf bag provides such advantages in taking out or in putting away a golf ball or shoulder belt, maintaining a beverage in a warm or cool state and further receiving golf goods into the pockets in good order.

The present invention is readily distinguishable from the teachings of Yamazoe. Indeed, independent claim 1 of the present invention relates to a pocket closure device for a bag, wherein said bag comprises a top end, a bottom end, and an outer surface, said pocket closure device comprising: a storage receptacle having a front panel, a back panel, side panels, and an interior space, wherein said storage receptacle is coupled to said outer surface of said bag and wherein said storage receptacle further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and biasing

means coupled to said front panel and to said outer surface of said bag for substantially sealing said interior space in a first closed position, and for allowing access to said interior space in a second open position. As Yamazoe neither discloses nor suggests a pocket closure device for a bag, wherein said bag comprises a top end, a bottom end, and an outer surface, said pocket closure device comprising: a storage receptacle having a front panel, a back panel, side panels, and an interior space, wherein said storage receptacle is coupled to said outer surface of said bag and wherein said storage receptacle further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and biasing means coupled to said front panel and to said outer surface of said bag for substantially sealing said interior space in a first closed position, and for allowing access to said interior space in a second open position, Yamazoe clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 1 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 2-7 add further limitations to independent claim 1, Yamazoe neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 2-7.

The present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Yamazoe in light of independent claim 8. Indeed, independent claim 8 of the present invention relates to a pocket assembly for facilitating retention of and access to accessories placed therein, said pocket assembly comprising: an accessory pouch integral to an outer surface of a bag, wherein said accessory pouch is capable of receiving and retaining accessories, and wherein said accessory pouch further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and at least one resilient member laterally disposed along said accessory pouch, said at least one resilient member capable of being selectively actuated to allow access to an interior space defined by said accessory pouch. As Yamazoe neither discloses nor suggests a pocket assembly for facilitating retention of and access to accessories placed therein, said pocket assembly comprising: an accessory pouch integral to an outer surface of a bag, wherein said accessory pouch is capable of receiving and

retaining accessories, and wherein said accessory pouch further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and at least one resilient member laterally disposed along said accessory pouch, said at least one resilient member capable of being selectively actuated to allow access to an interior space defined by said accessory pouch, Yamazoe clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 8 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 9-14 add further limitations to independent claim 8, Yamazoe neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 9-14.

The present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Yamazoe in light of independent claim 15. Indeed, independent claim 15 of the present invention relates to a bag comprising: a housing for receiving and retaining a plurality of items; a pocket member biased to said housing for receiving and retaining at least one accessory, wherein said pocket member comprises: a front panel; a bottom support panel attached to said front panel; a back panel attached to said bottom support panel, wherein said back panel is retained substantially adjacent said housing; side panels coupled between said front panel and said back panel such that said front panel is retained substantially opposite said back panel; and at least one biasing element longitudinally disposed along at least one of said side panels and coupled to each of said front panel and said housing such that said pocket member provides selective access to said at least one accessory. As Yamazoe neither discloses nor suggests a bag comprising: a housing for receiving and retaining a plurality of items; a pocket member biased to said housing for receiving and retaining at least one accessory, wherein said pocket member comprises: a front panel; a bottom support panel attached to said front panel; a back panel attached to said bottom support panel, wherein said back panel is retained substantially adjacent said housing; side panels coupled between said front panel and said back panel such that said front panel is retained

substantially opposite said back panel; and at least one biasing element longitudinally disposed along at least one of said side panels and coupled to each of said front panel and said housing such that said pocket member provides selective access to said at least one accessory, Yamazoe clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 15 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 16-24 add further limitations to independent claim 15, Yamazoe neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 16-24.

Finally, the present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Yamazoe in light of independent claim 25. Indeed, independent claim 25 of the present invention relates to a method for facilitating retention of and access to items in a bag, said method comprising: providing a bag having a pocket member with an opening for receiving and retaining at least one item; coupling to a front panel of said pocket member a first portion of at least one elongate biasing member; attaching a second portion of said at least one elongate biasing member to said bag, wherein said at least one elongate biasing member provides selective access to an interior of said pocket member. As Yamazoe neither discloses nor suggests a method for facilitating retention of and access to items in a bag, said method comprising: providing a bag having a pocket member with an opening for receiving and retaining at least one item; coupling to a front panel of said pocket member a first portion of at least one elongate biasing member; attaching a second portion of said at least one elongate biasing member to said bag, wherein said at least one elongate biasing member provides selective access to an interior of said pocket member, Yamazoe clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 25 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 26-31 adds further limitations to independent claim 25, Yamazoe neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 26-31.

United States Patent No. 5,176,253 to Perrin et al.

United States Patent No. 5,176,253 issued on January 5, 1993 to Perrin et al. (hereinafter “Perrin”) discloses a golf bag for carrying golf clubs and related accessories. The bag has a carrying strap which can be folded and stored in a compartment in the bag when not in use. The bag also has a carrying pouch which can be detached from the bag and worn about the waist of a user. The bag also has a zippered pocket which, when opened, renders the contents immediately accessible to the user.

The present invention is readily distinguishable from the teachings of Perrin. Indeed, independent claim 1 of the present invention relates to a pocket closure device for a bag, wherein said bag comprises a top end, a bottom end, and an outer surface, said pocket closure device comprising: a storage receptacle having a front panel, a back panel, side panels, and an interior space, wherein said storage receptacle is coupled to said outer surface of said bag and wherein said storage receptacle further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and biasing means coupled to said front panel and to said outer surface of said bag for substantially sealing said interior space in a first closed position, and for allowing access to said interior space in a second open position. As Perrin neither discloses nor suggests a pocket closure device for a bag, wherein said bag comprises a top end, a bottom end, and an outer surface, said pocket closure device comprising: a storage receptacle having a front panel, a back panel, side panels, and an interior space, wherein said storage receptacle is coupled to said outer surface of said bag and wherein said storage receptacle further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and biasing means coupled to said front panel and to said outer surface of said bag for substantially sealing said interior space in a first closed position, and for allowing access to said interior space in a second open position, Perrin clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent

claim 1 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 2-7 add further limitations to independent claim 1, Perrin neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 2-7.

The present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Perrin in light of independent claim 8. Indeed, independent claim 8 of the present invention relates to a pocket assembly for facilitating retention of and access to accessories placed therein, said pocket assembly comprising: an accessory pouch integral to an outer surface of a bag, wherein said accessory pouch is capable of receiving and retaining accessories, and wherein said accessory pouch further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and at least one resilient member laterally disposed along said accessory pouch, said at least one resilient member capable of being selectively actuated to allow access to an interior space defined by said accessory pouch. As Perrin neither discloses nor suggests a pocket assembly for facilitating retention of and access to accessories placed therein, said pocket assembly comprising: an accessory pouch integral to an outer surface of a bag, wherein said accessory pouch is capable of receiving and retaining accessories, and wherein said accessory pouch further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and at least one resilient member laterally disposed along said accessory pouch, said at least one resilient member capable of being selectively actuated to allow access to an interior space defined by said accessory pouch, Perrin clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 8 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 9-14 add further limitations to independent claim 8, Perrin neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 9-14.

The present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Perrin in light of independent claim 15. Indeed, independent claim 15 of the present invention relates to a bag comprising: a housing for receiving and retaining a plurality of items; a pocket member biased to

said housing for receiving and retaining at least one accessory, wherein said pocket member comprises: a front panel; a bottom support panel attached to said front panel; a back panel attached to said bottom support panel, wherein said back panel is retained substantially adjacent said housing; side panels coupled between said front panel and said back panel such that said front panel is retained substantially opposite said back panel; and at least one biasing element longitudinally disposed along at least one of said side panels and coupled to each of said front panel and said housing such that said pocket member provides selective access to said at least one accessory. As Perrin neither discloses nor suggests a bag comprising: a housing for receiving and retaining a plurality of items; a pocket member biased to said housing for receiving and retaining at least one accessory, wherein said pocket member comprises: a front panel; a bottom support panel attached to said front panel; a back panel attached to said bottom support panel, wherein said back panel is retained substantially adjacent said housing; side panels coupled between said front panel and said back panel such that said front panel is retained substantially opposite said back panel; and at least one biasing element longitudinally disposed along at least one of said side panels and coupled to each of said front panel and said housing such that said pocket member provides selective access to said at least one accessory, Perrin clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 15 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 16-24 add further limitations to independent claim 15, Perrin neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 16-24.

Finally, the present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Perrin in light of independent claim 25. Indeed, independent claim 25 of the present invention relates to a method for facilitating retention of and access to items in a bag, said method comprising: providing a bag having a pocket member with an opening for receiving and retaining at least one

item; coupling to a front panel of said pocket member a first portion of at least one elongate biasing member; attaching a second portion of said at least one elongate biasing member to said bag, wherein said at least one elongate biasing member provides selective access to an interior of said pocket member. As Perrin neither discloses nor suggests a method for facilitating retention of and access to items in a bag, said method comprising: providing a bag having a pocket member with an opening for receiving and retaining at least one item; coupling to a front panel of said pocket member a first portion of at least one elongate biasing member; attaching a second portion of said at least one elongate biasing member to said bag, wherein said at least one elongate biasing member provides selective access to an interior of said pocket member, Perrin clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 25 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 26-31 adds further limitations to independent claim 25, Perrin neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 26-31.

United States Patent No. 4,869,365 to Perdue et al.

United States Patent No. 4,869,365 issued on September 26, 1989 to Perdue et al. (hereinafter “Perdue”) discloses an accessory to be detachably secured to a golf bag for carrying supplemental golf related and personal items. A plurality of quick release closeable pockets are columnarly mounted upon the exterior face of a generally rectangular panel. Removable attachment is made to a standard golf bag through the use of tensioned, hooked fasteners at the top and bottom of the rectangular panel.

The present invention is readily distinguishable from the teachings of Perdue. Indeed, independent claim 1 of the present invention relates to a pocket closure device for a bag, wherein said bag comprises a top end, a bottom end, and an outer surface, said pocket closure device comprising: a storage receptacle having a front panel, a back panel, side panels, and an interior

space, wherein said storage receptacle is coupled to said outer surface of said bag and wherein said storage receptacle further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and biasing means coupled to said front panel and to said outer surface of said bag for substantially sealing said interior space in a first closed position, and for allowing access to said interior space in a second open position. As Perdue neither discloses nor suggests a pocket closure device for a bag, wherein said bag comprises a top end, a bottom end, and an outer surface, said pocket closure device comprising: a storage receptacle having a front panel, a back panel, side panels, and an interior space, wherein said storage receptacle is coupled to said outer surface of said bag and wherein said storage receptacle further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and biasing means coupled to said front panel and to said outer surface of said bag for substantially sealing said interior space in a first closed position, and for allowing access to said interior space in a second open position, Perdue clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 1 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 2-7 add further limitations to independent claim 1, Perdue neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 2-7.

The present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Perdue in light of independent claim 8. Indeed, independent claim 8 of the present invention relates to a pocket assembly for facilitating retention of and access to accessories placed therein, said pocket assembly comprising: an accessory pouch integral to an outer surface of a bag, wherein said accessory pouch is capable of receiving and retaining accessories, and wherein said accessory pouch further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and at least one resilient member laterally disposed along said accessory pouch, said at least one resilient member capable of being selectively actuated to allow access to an interior space defined by said accessory pouch. As Perdue neither discloses nor suggests a pocket assembly for facilitating retention of

and access to accessories placed therein, said pocket assembly comprising: an accessory pouch integral to an outer surface of a bag, wherein said accessory pouch is capable of receiving and retaining accessories, and wherein said accessory pouch further comprises an absence of traditional locking devices; and at least one resilient member laterally disposed along said accessory pouch, said at least one resilient member capable of being selectively actuated to allow access to an interior space defined by said accessory pouch, Perdue clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 8 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 9-14 add further limitations to independent claim 8, Perdue neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 9-14.

The present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Perdue in light of independent claim 15. Indeed, independent claim 15 of the present invention relates to a bag comprising: a housing for receiving and retaining a plurality of items; a pocket member biased to said housing for receiving and retaining at least one accessory, wherein said pocket member comprises: a front panel; a bottom support panel attached to said front panel; a back panel attached to said bottom support panel, wherein said back panel is retained substantially adjacent said housing; side panels coupled between said front panel and said back panel such that said front panel is retained substantially opposite said back panel; and at least one biasing element longitudinally disposed along at least one of said side panels and coupled to each of said front panel and said housing such that said pocket member provides selective access to said at least one accessory. As Perdue neither discloses nor suggests a bag comprising: a housing for receiving and retaining a plurality of items; a pocket member biased to said housing for receiving and retaining at least one accessory, wherein said pocket member comprises: a front panel; a bottom support panel attached to said front panel; a back panel attached to said bottom support

panel, wherein said back panel is retained substantially adjacent said housing; side panels coupled between said front panel and said back panel such that said front panel is retained substantially opposite said back panel; and at least one biasing element longitudinally disposed along at least one of said side panels and coupled to each of said front panel and said housing such that said pocket member provides selective access to said at least one accessory, Perdue clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 15 of the present application. Moreover, as claims 16-24 add further limitations to independent claim 15, Perdue neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 16-24.

Finally, the present invention is also distinguishable from the teachings of Perdue in light of independent claim 25. Indeed, independent claim 25 of the present invention relates to a method for facilitating retention of and access to items in a bag, said method comprising: providing a bag having a pocket member with an opening for receiving and retaining at least one item; coupling to a front panel of said pocket member a first portion of at least one elongate biasing member; attaching a second portion of said at least one elongate biasing member to said bag, wherein said at least one elongate biasing member provides selective access to an interior of said pocket member. As Perdue neither discloses nor suggests a method for facilitating retention of and access to items in a bag, said method comprising: providing a bag having a pocket member with an opening for receiving and retaining at least one item; coupling to a front panel of said pocket member a first portion of at least one elongate biasing member; attaching a second portion of said at least one elongate biasing member to said bag, wherein said at least one elongate biasing member provides selective access to an interior of said pocket member, Perdue clearly does not anticipate nor render obvious independent claim 25 of the present application.

Moreover, as claims 26-31 adds further limitations to independent claim 25, Perdue neither anticipates nor renders obvious claims 26-31.

Summary and Conclusion

In light of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims of the present invention contain limitations that are neither disclosed nor rendered obvious by the relevant references discovered in the pre-examination search. The unique combination of features or elements presented in the present invention are not found in any of the prior art references. Applicants therefore respectfully submit that the present invention is patentable over the prior art references.

DATED this 25th day of March, 2004.

Respectfully submitted,


MICHAEL F. KRIEGER
Attorney for Applicant
Registration No. 35,232

KIRTON & McCONKIE
1800 Eagle Gate Tower
60 East South Temple
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111
Telephone: (801) 328-3600
Facsimile: (801) 321-4893

MFK:BO

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